

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Block Island School

March 22, 2010

7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, March 22, 2010, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The following members were present: Shea Butcher, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, William Padien, and Richard Tretheway. Robert Hicks was also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (Hall, Padien) to approve the minutes of the meetings held on February 2 and 8, 2010, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Tretheway) to approve the executive session minutes of the meetings held on January 11, January 19, February 2, and February 8, 2010, as written carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

Annie Hall requested that the School Committee change its August meeting from the 16th to the 23rd because of a conflict. A motion (Padien, Hall) to change the August meeting from the 16th to the 23rd carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks submitted a memo regarding the possibility of sharing services with a mainland school district, but wanted to be sure the School Committee was interested in this idea before pursuing it further. He has had informal discussions with several districts, and there appears to be some potential mutual benefit between us and Westerly, specifically in the area of special education services. The collaboration would not be worth it unless Block Island would be able to gain programmatically. Mr. Hicks intends to involve parents and teachers in the investigation, which should be completed as soon as possible so the issue can be resolved at the School Committee's April meeting. Committee members are interested if the collaboration is budget neutral or in Block Island's favor.

Mr. Hicks explained that the school funding formula proposed by the Rhode Island Department of Education is similar to the old formula, which was abandoned in 1992, in that both are quadratic equations based on property tax and median income. Even though Block Island's property tax value per student is the highest in the state, the median income is below average (20th out of 36 communities). Block Island has high property tax capacity, but that is modified in the formula because there is below average per capita income to pay property tax. Block Island is one of the biggest gainers by percentage, but not in dollars. Mr. Hicks stated that the funding would be phased in over 10 years. While he is not optimistic about state aid, if this proposal goes through Block Island School would

gain approximately \$43,000.

Old Business

A motion (Padien, Butcher) to approve Policy GK: Respectful and Peaceful School Community as posted was amended after discussion (Padien, Butcher) to approve the policy to take effect on April 12 with the provision that between now and then the attorney would peruse it carried with a vote of 5-0. Mr. Hicks will report back to the committee at the April meeting with the attorney's findings.

Mr. Hicks reported that a conservative projection of the current budget shows a possible fund balance of over \$100,000 for this fiscal year. This is based on an expected surplus in the electricity line item because of less usage and a smaller fuel surcharge. Salaries will be under spent because of an unfilled teacher assistant position, the first step replacement of a top step teacher, and reduced administrative salaries. Health insurance will be under due to the unfilled teacher assistant position and several positions not receiving health benefits. The state retirement contribution was reduced following legislative action last June resulting in a line surplus in addition to a proportional salary reduction. There is also a line item of \$49,000 that Mr. Hicks believes is a carryover from Article 31, which no longer exists. However, several line items will be over budget, especially in special education. With the town reducing next year's request by \$100,000 Mr. Hicks is hesitant to cover all of this with reserve funds. He suggested removing the capital spending of

\$51,000 from the budget and to use undesignated funds to pay for the projects, which would sustain the capital program and complete the currently identified tasks. In addition, the one-time budgeted technology upgrades of \$10,000 can be covered by undesignated funds. With these changes the gap would be reduced to \$39,000. Mr. Hicks suggested that the surplus could afford us the opportunity to replace the skylight over the music room instead of repairing it.

A motion (Padien, McGarry) to have the superintendent prepare a bid to replace the skylight over the music room carried with a vote of 4-1 with Shea Butcher voting in the negative.

New Business

A proposed calendar for the 2010-2011 school year was submitted for School Committee review. Richard Tretheway asked if it would be possible to have an earlier February vacation because a large number of families have booked vacations based on the current calendar. Mr. Hicks will research this and report back to the School Committee at the April meeting.

A motion (Padien, Butcher) to accept with regret Roberta Closter's resignation as the assistant coach for the varsity softball team carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to consent to the appointment of Jessica Jalbert as the head coach for junior high softball carried with a vote

of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to consent to the appointment of Robert Closter, Jr. as the head coach for junior high baseball carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to consent to the appointment of Chris O'Neill as the assistant coach for junior high baseball carried with a vote of 5-0.

Calendar of Events

A calendar of events for the months of March and April were submitted for School Committee information. The next regular meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Monday, April 12, 2010.

Correspondence

Various pieces of correspondence were forwarded for School Committee information.

Executive Session

A motion (Padien, Butcher) at 8:05 p.m. to go into executive session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-46-4, 5(a)(2) for contract negotiations and (8) for a student issue/parent appeal carried with a vote of 5-0. It is noted that the parents received written notification regarding the discussion to be held in executive session.

Open Session

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 8:59 p.m. to return to open session carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to seal the executive session minutes carried with a vote of 5-0.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Tretheway) at 9:01 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: April 12, 2010